**Intonarumori**

Adrian Curtin

*Intonarumori* (noise intoners) are musical instruments designed by the Italian Futurist painter-turned-musician Luigi Russolo (1885-1947), who, in 1914, proposed an ‘art of noises’ that took inspiration from the modern city, the natural world, and modern warfare. Russolo’s noise instruments consisted of plywood boxes containing motorized mechanics that activated a stretched diaphragm, which made sounds through a horn that an operator (musician) could manipulate in terms of pitch by pulling on a lever. Russolo’s orchestra of *intonarumori* included such instruments as the exploder, crackler, buzzer, stamper, gurgler, screamer, rustler, whistler, thunderer, and the croaker. Pieces composed for the *intonarumori* include Russolo’s *Risveglio di una città* (*Awakening of a City*) (1913-1914) and *Convegno di automobili e di aeroplani* (*A Meeting of Motorcars and Aeroplanes*) (1913-1914). Noise music was played at Futurist performance events and concerts in Europe sporadically from 1913-1927 and achieved notoriety. The original instruments were destroyed in Milan in the Second World War. The sole recordings of compositions that feature them are of poor quality and may misrepresent or only partially convey their original sounding. Luciano Chessa has pioneered the reconstruction of the *intonarumori*, which, he argues, Russolo conceived as occult instruments, portals to another world.

References and further reading

BROWN, B. 1981-1982. The Noise Instruments of Luigi Russolo. *Perspectives of New Music,* 20**,** 31-48. (An essay on Russolo's *intonarumori*.)

CHESSA, L. 2012. *Luigi Russolo, Futurist: Noise, Visual Arts, and the Occult,* Berkeley, University of California Press. (A revisionist account of Russolo's art that highlights its theosophical basis.)

RUSSOLO, L. 1986. *The Art of Noises,* New York, Pendragon Press. (Russolo's writings on futurist music.)

Paratextual Material

1. Historical recordings of music featuring intonarumori: <http://www.ubu.com/sound/russolo_l.html>
2. Video of a 2009 performance of “L’acoustique ivresse (Les Bruits de la Paix)” by Luciano Chessa, featuring reconstructed *intonarumori*: <http://vimeo.com/46083321>